



MALTA AMATEUR RADIO  
LEAGUE MONTHLY NEWS  
LETTER



Reaching out to all members

ISSUE No: 067

January 2016



Roger Davies Barrett 9H5UG

Dear Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and would like also to seek your opinion regarding the resurrection of the MARL monthly newsletter.

This club has long had a tradition of promoting the values of sharing and enhancing our passion for amateur radio in all its many forms. Whether you are a CW user, Voice or Data user one fact is common to us all. Information is a vital part of the success or failure of being able to achieve the aims of the hobby. I myself have embarked on a steep learning curve having recently been granted my licence last year and thanks to the club members have managed to build my shack and antenna array. Much of this information was by word of mouth when I attended the club on Tuesdays and Thursdays and then applied by me in my shack.

What I would like to propose is that we use the newsletter to share our knowledge of propagation, technical advances and changing local conditions amongst members monthly.

Please feel free to contact me on E Mail [rogerdeebie@gmail.com](mailto:rogerdeebie@gmail.com) as any feedback is welcome

## **1. PROPAGATION REPORT FOR THE LAST THREE MONTHS (Msida Malta)**

QTH. 52A Church Street, Msida

Conditions:

Kenwood TS140S,

MFJ 969 ATU

Vertical Dipole with three radials,

Inverted V,

Delta Double Apex loop fed with twin feeder 300 Ohms.

Operator. 9H5UG

### **September – October 2015**

September saw the bands begin to open up with notably the 10M band showing signs of life. The 20 M band was still very active and occasionally the 17 M band produced QSO, s from UK.

It is also notable that the inherent noise levels on the 20 M band seemed to increase significantly towards midday.

As for the previous months the European stations were very productive with some more further afield such as The Orkney Islands MM6PHG and Glasgow 2M0ONW coming through with a genuine 5/8 and 5/7 respectively.

Significant QSO,s were USA, Brazil, Uruguay, Mozambique, Australia, Zimbabwe and St Helena Island ZD7FT.

### **QSO Band Breakdown**

56% of QSO,s on the 20 M band

8% of QSO,s on the 17 M band

14% of QSO,s on the 15 M band

19% of QSO,s on the 10 M Band.

It was noticeable that when the 10 M band opened up in the early afternoon 10:00 – 11:00 UTC the majority of the traffic was centred around 28.500 MHz and downwards till about 28.400 M Hz and these conditions stayed constant till early evening with relatively slow QSB drifting in and out as the afternoons progressed.

#### Authors Note.

It must be stressed that these observations are very subjective and I do appreciate that on other parts of the Island conditions may well be different with different locations, antennas and height above sea level. The object is to share my experiences based on my observations here in Msida.

#### **Club Activities for 2015**

- a) I.A.R.U. 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary special event. This entailed the using of the call sign 9H1IARU all modes and the details of how it went can be found on the MARL Facebook page
- b) Field day at Dwejra
- c) Z81X Goodwill South Sudan project December 11<sup>th</sup> 2015
- d) To date the club activities have been posted on Facebook but I will endeavour to include monthly details in each issue of the newsletter of activities that occurred the previous month for those that do not have a Facebook account .

## **2. The Home Brew Section.**

This section I would like to dedicate to the home brewers amongst us who like to build and experiment with Radio gear.

Many of us have built our own antennas and Balun devices all with differing results.

So why not share your results with fellow club members?

I myself have built several antennas and Balun's (1:1 and 4:1) with varying degrees of success. The question I ask myself is:

- a) Do they achieve what they are supposed to do?
- b) Can they be further improved?
- c) Is there a better alternative?

Recently I migrated my number two antenna to a Delta Loop antenna with 27 foot legs, 91 feet in all. This I fed with an apex fed homemade feed point which I constructed out of a 1 Euro T conduit, two stainless steel bolts (M6) with wingnuts and washers and two 2 Euro cent coins.



Added to this I invested in 10 Metres of twin 300 ohm feeder from Fabian

And the results were not overwhelming but better than the Balun and RG58 that I was previously using.

The first noticeable difference was the noise levels on the bands were less.

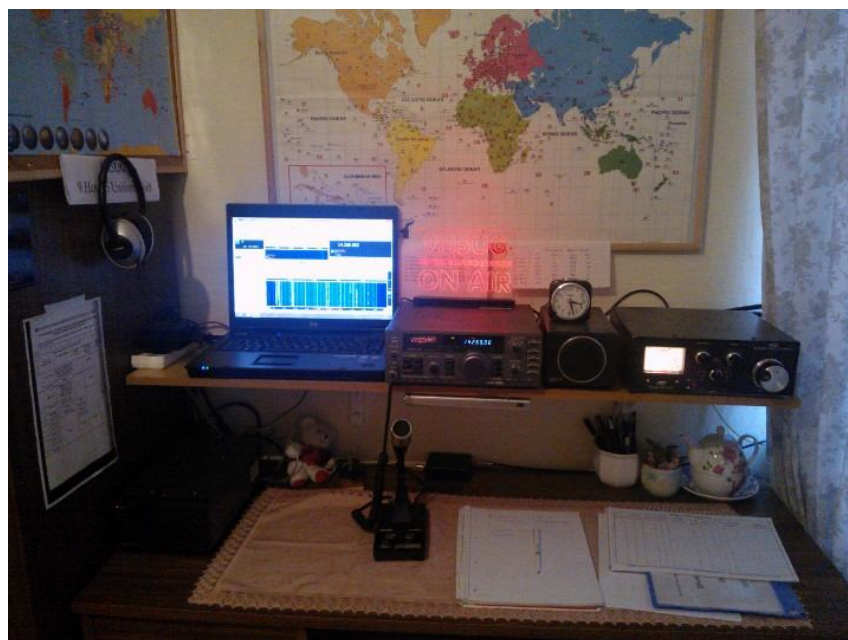
The delta loop was acting as a horizontally polarised antenna which was less susceptible to "Vertical" noise.

The antenna Tuner (MFJ 989) was far easier to tune for 0 VSWR on every band and required only a small adjustment of the coil on QSY,s.

However on the 40 M band I have to resort to the vertical dipole as I cannot get the VSWR down below 1:3 on the Loop.

Another project now completed is the integration of my new SDR PLAY RSA into my shack along with my data interface for JT 65 and PSK 31 still work in progress.

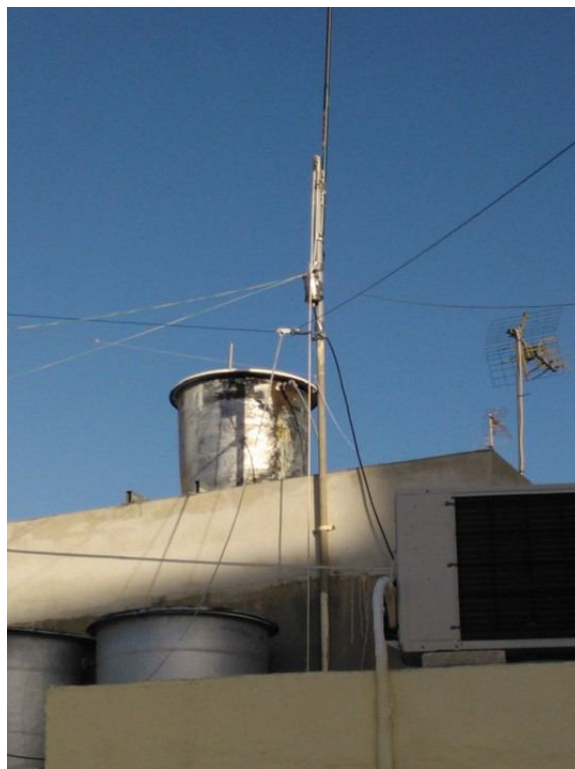
The SDRPlay has been invaluable as a source of monitoring other bands whilst working QSO's.



The addition of the SDR had its own problems as the PC that I used was an HP Laptop Duo Core running Windows 8.1 and after installing SDR Console and SDR Server the problems began with sharing as my Firewalls blocked Port 7999

Which caused problems. This was overcome by configuring the sharing options correctly but beware, instructions are pretty vague and it took some trial and error in order to get my SDR public.

The antenna I have to thank Robin at the club for his advice namely, use my 25 metre run of 300 ohm feeder that I had spare to build a folded di-pole for the SDRPlay. Centre fed it worked well on all bands on the SDR and it was soon up and running.



The roof now seems to be getting a bit full but soon I will get my flagpole and I will keep you updated on any further home brew.



### 3. Upcoming and recent activities.

1. The newsletter will be issued every month by e-mail.
2. I have permissions to reproduce OH2BH, Article on Working DX Pileups. This will be included in Feb issue.
3. You may remember the visit of OH2BBM who gave a presentation at the club



I have kept in touch and have his permission to reproduce his expeditions in this newsletter, so barring my being overwhelmed with your input I will include sections in future issues.

4. The history of our hobby. I have in my possession some material that I shall also publish to give some insight into how we arrived at where we are today.



## STOP PRESS: Earth tremor felt in Malta:



**Ivan Privitera**

January 13 at 6:44pm · [Pembroke](#)

A tremor measuring 4.4 on the Richter scale was felt all over Malta this afternoon. The tremor, which lasted a good 10 seconds accompanied by rumbling, was felt just after 6pm. It was at a depth of 39 kilometers some 32 kilometers north east off Malta.

The MARL Emergency Communications team has activated a net on 145.300 and R1 coordinators have already been alerted. It was a wakeup call and response / readiness exercise for us. Luckily no casualties or damages were reported. The Net was active within 15 minutes and reports started coming in within minutes. Within less than an hour, nearly all team reported on air including other local amateurs not within the team.

*Editor's note: For those members who would like to learn more about MARLs involvement in disaster recovery and communications I am sure Ivan would be pleased to give you any information about this subject.*

So 73 to all who may read this and may all your QSOs be far and 59s.

Regards,

Roger D B 9H5UG.